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Finding Forever Families for Children in Foster Care

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**Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption Announces
Best Adoption-Friendly Architecture, Engineering and Construction Businesses**

(Dublin, OH – April 30, 2007) The Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption today announced the Best Adoption-Friendly architecture, engineering and construction businesses in America, based on adoption benefits offered to employees. South Mountain Company (West Tisbury, MA) ranked #1, followed by Paric Corporation (O'Fallon, MO). The South Mountain Company also ranked #1 in Massachusetts and #8 in the Top 100 list nationwide.

The South Mountain Company is 30-person employee-owned, resource conscious design/build firm located on Martha's Vineyard. The company's adoption benefits include up to \$10,000 per adoption and four weeks paid leave. Architectural Designer Derrill Bazy and his wife JoAnn Eccher adopted two-week old Jacob six years ago.

"The company's support, coupled with available tax benefits, removed the distraction of financial concerns. This enabled me to stabilize my work schedule, which allowed my wife and I to focus more fully on parenting," Bazy said.

Rita Soronen, executive director of the Foundation, said roughly 64% of Americans have had a personal experience with adoption. "The Best Adoption-Friendly Workplaces in America lists recognize employers who excel at supporting their employees who adopt by providing financial assistance and paid leave."

The Foundation composed the Best Adoption-Friendly Workplaces in America lists after CEOs and human resource executives from 762 U.S. companies participated in either a direct mail or online survey. Employers were ranked based on their adoption benefits, such as the amount of financial reimbursement and paid leave available to employees who adopt. The Foundation also recognized the top 10 by size and companies who support the cause of adoption and adoptive families in other ways (go to www.AdoptionFriendlyWorkplace.org to view each list). Survey respondents offer financial reimbursement ranging from \$500 to \$20,960 and paid leave ranging from one to 16 weeks with averages of \$4,700 in financial reimbursement and five weeks of paid leave.

The Foundation partnered with several organizations to extend the survey's scope: *Employee Benefits News*, a SourceMedia publication that is the leading source of information for benefits decision makers; National Restaurant Association; the Ohio Chamber of Commerce, and the Wisconsin Manufacturers & Commerce. Each extended invitations to subscribers/members to participate in the survey.

According to Hewitt Associates LLC, a global outsourcing and consulting company providing human capital management services, the number of employers offering adoption benefits is increasing. The company's *United States Salaried Employee*

Benefits 2006-2007 study reported a steady rise of companies offering adoption benefits, from 12% in 1990 to 45% in 2006.

Soronen said organizations recognize the value of adoption benefits – to both the employee and the company. “The monetary support is tremendous for the adoptive parent, and having time off to bond with their child is vital,” she said. “As for the employer, adoption benefits are an affordable way to enhance employee recruitment, retention and goodwill. We find that most employers are surprised at how little adoption benefits cost the company.”

The DTFA commissioned Harris Interactive Inc., a worldwide research firm, to conduct a national attitude survey about adoption benefits. Harris reported 95% of Americans believe companies should offer adoption benefits, but only a small percentage of people actually use them (*National Adoption Attitudes Survey*, June 2002). The Foundation’s data indicates utilization rates are generally less than one-half of one percent of the company’s employee population.

Dave Thomas, who was an adopted child and founder of Wendy’s Restaurants and the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption, started the adoption benefits in the workplace initiative more than 15 years ago. He simply began calling other CEOs to suggest they add adoption benefits to their human resource packages because, as he said, “It’s the right thing to do.” Thirty-nine percent of the employers surveyed by the Foundation agreed with Dave. They also cited multiple other factors that influenced their decision to offer adoption benefits, such as employee requests for adoption (40%), equity for adoptive parents (52%), a family-friendly image (61%), and a competitive work/life benefits package (62%).

The Foundation offers a free toolkit for employers to guide them through the process of proposing and establishing an adoption benefits policy. Order online at www.AdoptionFriendlyWorkplace.org or by calling toll-free (877) 777-4222.

About the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption

The Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption is a non-profit 501(c)3 public charity dedicated to dramatically increasing the adoptions of the more than 140,000 children in North America’s foster care systems ready and waiting to be adopted. Created by Wendy’s founder Dave Thomas, who was adopted as a child, the Foundation spearheads programs such as Wendy’s Wonderful Kids, which puts adoption recruiters in all 50 states and Canada to find permanent, loving families for children in the foster care system, and Adoption-Friendly Workplace, which encourages employers to offer adoption benefits to their employees. The Foundation also works with adoption advocates and officials to streamline the adoption process and make adoption more affordable for families. As the only Foundation dedicated exclusively to foster care adoption, we are driven by Dave’s simple value: Do what’s best for the child. To learn more about the Foundation’s work, please visit www.DaveThomasFoundationforAdoption.org.

About the Survey Methodology

The 100 Best Adoption-Friendly Workplaces List was compiled using data collected from 762 U.S. employers. The Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption extended an invitation to participate by mail to 31,000 business leaders and human resource executives, via advertisements in human resource trade journals and through surveys at human

resource conferences. Rankings are based first on the maximum amount of financial reimbursement per adoption, which includes any additional support for special-needs adoption, and second on the maximum number of weeks of paid leave per adoption. Employers who offer both are ranked higher than those providing only monetary support. Employers who have identical ranking criteria are listed alphabetically.

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**2007 Best Adoption-Friendly Workplace List
 Industry Leaders: Architecture, Engineering and Construction**

Industry Rank	Employer	U.S. Headquarters	Number of Employees	Financial Assistance for Adoption <i>*includes additional assistance for special needs adoption</i>	Maximum Weeks of Paid Leave for Adoption
1	South Mountain Company	West Tisbury, MA	30	\$10,000	4
2	Paric Corporation	O'Fallon, MO	200	\$4,000	6

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